

QUARTERLY NEWS

PUBLIC SAFETY ONE OF MANY BENEFITS TO KING COUNTY'S "BEST IN THE NATION" FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT RATING

CITIZENS ENJOY 35 PERCENT REDUCTION IN FLOOD INSURANCE PREMIUMS

On October 19, 2005, King County's floodplain management programs were honored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with the top community rating of any county in the United States.

The recent devastation experienced by Gulf Coast communities underscores the importance of floodplain planning. King County residents can be proud of King County's "Best in the Nation" recognition for unmatched flood protection efforts. The news is not only positive for floodplain residents hoping to stay safe and dry and keep property damage down when riverbanks overflow; this rating translates directly into more than \$200 in savings on individual flood insurance premiums a year for residents of unincorporated King County.



Floodplain management techniques enforced by DDES include requiring elevated homes in floodplains.

"Given the devastation we have all witnessed on our televisions as a result of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, I can't tell you how reassuring it feels to earn this CRS rating and have FEMA distinguish King County programs that are helping to keep people safe, reduce damages and keep flood insurance premiums down for our residents," said King County Executive Ron Sims. "This is a shining moment for good local government providing an exceptional regional service."

King County's floodplain management rating is given by FEMA under the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System (CRS), which recognizes communities that go beyond the federal government's minimum requirements for floodplain management. King County is now upgraded from a Class 4 to a Class 3. This will save floodplain insurance holders 35 percent overall on annual premium costs. The average savings is \$283 per policy per year. Countywide, the savings will exceed \$450,536 annually, and the savings will be passed

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KING COUNTY'S FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT RATING

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on directly to flood insurance policy holders. This cost reduction went into effect October 1, 2005.

King County now has the best CRS rating of any county in the United States. To put a Class 3 rating into perspective, of more than 1,000 communities nationwide participating in the CRS program, only 30 have ratings as low as Class 5. There are only two communities in the entire nation – King County and the City of Tulsa, OK – with a rating of Class 3 or better.

The King County departments of Development and Environmental Services and Natural Resources and Parks work closely to coordinate the planning and implementation of floodplain management in King County. Their efforts result in discounted flood insurance rates for all policy holders in unincorporated King County. Highlights include, but are not limited to:

- Developing a comprehensive Flood Hazard Reduction Plan adopted by the King County Council that recommends comprehensive and long-term solutions to flood problems;
- Performing floodplain mapping studies to reflect up-to-date conditions in FEMA's regulatory floodplain maps and to delineate channel migration hazard areas and other flood related hazards;
- Maintaining extensive Geographical information Systems (GIS) capabilities used to map and regulate flood hazard areas;

- Enforcing a variety of construction and development regulations pertaining to flood hazard areas, including the Critical Areas Ordinance;
- Maintaining and distributing floodplain elevation certificates for new construction and development within flood hazard areas;
- Operating King County's Flood Warning Center, which alerts other public agencies, citizens and businesses on a 7-day, 24-hour basis during flood events on: the status of river flows and dam operations, flood warning forecasts issued by the National Weather Service, road closures, and/or the need to evacuate;
- Providing annual public outreach and community awareness programs to agencies, citizens and landowners about floodplain hazards and floodplain management services
- Constructing capital improvement projects for flood hazard reduction;
- Acquiring, relocating, and elevating residential structures located in flood hazard areas;
- Maintaining an inventory of flood protection facilities, including levees, revetments, pump plants weirs, and instream structural elements.

Anyone can purchase flood insurance and property does not have to reside in a flood hazard area to be insured. **For more information on flood insurance policies, citizens should call 1-888-FLOOD29.**

2005 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The King County Comprehensive Plan guides growth and development in the unincorporated areas of King County and sets county policy on such major issues as annexation, transportation, and environmental protection. Once every year, small, routine or technical changes can be made to the plan.

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan update, which was finalized this past summer, modified development codes and policies including three land use and zoning amendments affecting White Center and Vashon Island. The complete amendment document is available for review at www.metrokc.gov/ddes/compplan/2005. Copies are also available at the

Department of Development and Environmental Services, 900 Oakesdale Avenue SW, Renton. To request a copy, please send an e-mail to compplan@metrokc.gov.

For additional information on the King County Comprehensive Plan or the processes used to update the Plan, please contact Paul Reitenbach in the DDES Director's Office at 206-296-6705.

KING COUNTY MAKING IT EASIER FOR HOMEOWNERS TO PREPARE FOR AN EMERGENCY

FREE HOME EARTHQUAKE RETROFIT PERMITS AVAILABLE AT DDES

King County's Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) is making it easier for citizens in the unincorporated area to prepare for an emergency. Effective October 1, 2005, fees for home earthquake retrofit permits have been eliminated. Homeowners will still need to meet specific construction standards in order to receive a permit, however earthquake retrofit permits for older homes in unincorporated King County that have not adequately been anchored to their foundations are now issued free of charge. This policy change amounts to a cost savings approaching \$500 per customer.

Application requirements for home earthquake retrofit permits are outlined on the DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes. Simply click on INFORMATION BULLETINS, then on Bulletin #50: **Obtaining a Voluntary Home Earthquake Retrofit Permit**. To initiate the permit process, first contact our seismic home retrofit specialists at 206-296-6600. **Most permits can be issued over the counter following initial screening by DDES reviewers.**

OTHER STRATEGIES FOR MAKING YOUR HOME DISASTER-READY:

DDES HOME FIRE SAFETY PERMITS: Recent hurricane activity in the Southern United States emphasizes the importance of citizens preparing themselves and their homes for a disaster scenario. With regard to home fire safety, homeowners can secure free fire hazard reduction permits from DDES, which

allows clearing of native vegetation to create a 30-foot defensible space around a home. DDES issues these permits free of charge and applications can be submitted via this Web page. From www.metrokc.gov/ddes, simply click on PERMIT INFORMATION, then on ONLINE PERMIT APPLICATIONS. These permits are processed and mailed to the customer within one business day.

STORE NON-PERISHABLE SUPPLIES FOR 3-5

DAYS: All homes should have a 3-5 day stored supply of water (1 gallon per person, per day), non-perishable food, batteries and essential medicines. A first aid kit should also be stored with emergency supplies. Finally, be sure to establish an out-of-town emergency contact that loved ones can call to check on your well-being in the event of a local emergency. For more details on emergency preparedness, log onto the King County Office of Emergency Management Web site at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/prepare/>.

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS PROVIDED TO YOUR COMMUNITY:

Listen to local radio stations and heed directions to either evacuate your area or shelter in place. The aforementioned emergency supplies are particularly important for a shelter in place scenario.

For additional information on Earthquake Retrofit Permits, please contact Permit Center supervisor Chris Ricketts at 206-296-6750. For information on Home Fire Safety Clearing Permits, please contact Site Development Services Supervisor Randy Sandin at 206-296-6778.

DDES ON-LINE APPLICATION FORMS AVAILABLE IN MS WORD FORMAT FOR EASIER CUSTOMER USE

While DDES has posted permit application forms to our web page for several years, they have been posted in PDF format, requiring customers to print out specific documents and manually fill them out. By December 1, 2005, DDES will offer all application forms on line in both PDF and password-protected MS Word format. The latter will allow customers to save the forms as individual Word documents and fill them out on their own computers. We anticipate that this will be a significant service improvement for our permit customers.

To give feedback on the DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes, including any improvements that would be helpful to customers, please contact Bradley Foster, Interim DDES Communications Director, at 206-296-6682 or Donna Lund, DDES Web Developer at 206-296-7154.

CODE ENFORCEMENT PARTNERS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

DDES Code Enforcement staff are operating under a new philosophy and organizational approach designed to foster partnerships with local communities, making Code Enforcement staff more visible and accessible. The new program, called *Community-Oriented Code Enforcement*, assigns code enforcement officers to geographic areas of unincorporated King County and emphasizes communication and partnership between officers and community leaders to identify code enforcement service priorities in local areas.

Initially launched in the Bear Creek area, *Community-Oriented Code Enforcement* begins with an assigned code enforcement officer meeting with a local community group to explain the code enforcement process and mission, which is to investigate complaints of code violations on private property as outlined in the King County Code. A working relationship is then established between the Code Enforcement Officer and a community liaison(s). Priorities are established for responding to the most serious code violations, as well as those of greatest concern to the local community.

Examples of violations handled by Code Enforcement under Title 23 of King County Code include:

- construction without a permit;
- substandard housing;
- illegally placed mobile homes or factory-assembled structures;
- open wells and other hazardous conditions;
- dangerous or open to entry buildings;
- zoning code infractions and livestock infractions;
- illegal junk and debris; and
- illegal filling of wetlands, piping streams and clearing and grading without permits.

DDES is optimistic that this new service approach will



Code Enforcement Officer Mary Impson works on a violation in unincorporated King County.

improve service delivery to local communities, as well as illuminate the work already being done by the Code Enforcement Office.

Although there has always been more code enforcement complaints than resources available to address the work load, DDES has long prioritized the most serious health and environmental violations. Nevertheless, there are many other types of violations that are visual in nature and disturbing to local communities. Working with communities to prioritize these types of violations emphasizes King County's priority of bringing quality services to the unincorporated area.

For information on the code enforcement process, see the DDES Web page at www.metrokc.gov/ddes and click on CODE ENFORCEMENT. **Additional questions can be directed to Lamar Reed, Interim Code Enforcement Supervisor, at 206-296-7101.**

DDES OFFERS MORE EFFICIENT PERMIT PROCESS

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DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes. Simply open the HOT TOPICS menu. Application materials are also available on line.

Permit applicants still have the option of choosing a private

consultant who does not participate in the DDES Preferred Consultant Program.

For more information, please contact Jim Chan, Site Engineering and Planning Supervisor at 206-296-6740.

THE RAINY SEASON IS HERE

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

Each Fall DDES publishes information on erosion and sediment control (site run-off) requirements for construction sites in unincorporated King County. This information has been compiled to inform the building industry of current regulations, practices and restrictions during the wet season, which runs between October 1 and April 30 each year.

In addition to providing revised and updated information on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for residential and small construction sites, DDES staff will emphasize code restrictions on clearing and grading work. KCC 16.82.150D states that no clearing grading can occur between October 1st and March 31st in certain areas of the County, unless specific conditions are met. These areas include the Northshore, Bear Creek and Sammamish planning areas, plus the Soos Creek and Hylebos drainage basins. A County map showing the location of these areas may be found on the DDES web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes. Simply click on PERMIT INFORMATION and then click on EROSION/SEDIMENT CONTROL AND THE ESA. This web page also outlines erosion and sediment control requirements at construction sites as well as final site stabilization requirements.

DDES is committed to an effective erosion and sediment control program to protect our streams, lakes, wetlands and



Each fall the DDES web site publishes information on erosion and sediment control requirements for construction sites in unincorporated King County.

the aquatic species that inhabit them. Additional technical assistance for erosion control on project sites is available. DDES inspection staff is also available to offer suggestions to help builders and developers stay in compliance with County Code and permit conditions. At the same time, it is a builder's responsibility to implement and maintain controls on the job site. We look forward to working with our customers to meet this goal. **For additional details, please contact Bernard Moore, DDES Building Inspections Supervisor, at 206-296-6762.**

DDES WEBSITE TIPS: GET YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED QUICKLY AT WWW.METROKC.GOV/DDES

The DDES Web site offers in-depth information on building and land use permitting procedures for unincorporated King County. Listed below are just a few of the most popular sections of our web page. If you have feedback on or questions about the DDES Web site, please contact Bradley Foster, Interim DDES Communications Director, at 206-296-6682 or Donna Lund, DDES Web Developer at 206-296-7154.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

From the main DDES Web page, click on DDES FAQ if it is featured or click on the Permit Information button at the left. From there, click on DDES FAQ. OR, to save as a favorite: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/faq/>

To request a building inspection on-line

From the main DDES Web page, click on PERMIT

INFORMATION, then on BUILDING INSPECTIONS. OR to save as a favorite: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/inspections/index.htm>

To research procedures for contacting and using the DDES Records Center

From the main DDES Web page, click on RECORDS CENTER. OR to save as a favorite: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/perminfo/records.htm>

To view which permits can be applied for via the DDES Web page

From the main DDES Web page, click on PERMIT INFO., then on ON-LINE PERMIT APPLICATIONS. OR to save as a favorite, <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/services.htm#online>

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KING COUNTY REACHING OUT TO PROPERTY OWNERS

FREE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BRINGS COUNTY RESOURCES TO THE RURAL AREAS,
ALLOWING PROPERTY OWNERS TO MAKE SOUND PLANNING DECISIONS

King County's implementation of the CAO has featured a variety of public outreach efforts designed to help property owners accomplish plans for development and/or stewardship on their property. 2005 outreach efforts have also emphasized several new regulatory options for property owners designed to facilitate and bring efficiency to the permitting process.

Free assistance to property owners: King County's 2005 CAO public assistance efforts have been provided free of charge and with an emphasis on helping property owners implement development and/or stewardship plans on specific parcels. Attendance at these events has been strong; cumulatively, several hundred property owners in the unincorporated area have received direct assistance during 2005. Examples include:

- DDES employs two full-time employees charged with answering parcel-specific questions on critical area regulations, as well as conducting free site visits to discuss critical area issues with property owners. These staff can be reached by calling the DDES Critical Areas Section at 206-296-6600.
- The DDES Permit Center offers a full range of free technical assistance every business day between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Topics covered include: critical areas, drainage, plan review, clearing and grading, and engineering. Driving directions to DDES offices in Renton can be found on the DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes.
- King County has offered a series of open houses throughout unincorporated King County (6 total, by the end of October) at which property owners can look up their specific parcel on GIS and speak with County technical staff with expertise in critical areas, drainage, clearing and grading, stewardship planning.
- King County is offering weekly consulting sessions in the rural areas throughout September and October, during which property owners can get free advice and technical assistance on critical areas, the permitting process and stewardship planning.
- DDES hosted 3 separate workshops on the CAO regulatory framework in partnership with the Master Builders. Between 50-75 customers attended each event, 20 DVDs of the event have been requested by customers, and the workshop plays as on-demand streaming video on the DDES Web site. From the main DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes,



Betsy MacWhinney of the DDES Critical Areas section, providing free technical assistance to a customer in the DDES Permit Center.

- simply click on DDES WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS, then on VIEW EVENTS ON-LINE.
- Free permits are available for blackberry clearing and for clearing the defensible space around homes for fire safety – applicants are simply required to follow best management practices. These permits can be applied for via the DDES Web page at www.metrokc.gov/ddes and are issued within 1 business day. From the main DDES Web page, simply click on PERMIT INFO., then on ON-LINE PERMIT APPLICATIONS.
- King County's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program has been expanded to include case referrals from the DDES Code Enforcement Office. By offering ADR services to disputing neighbors, Code Enforcement Officers offer citizens the opportunity to address neighborhood dispute directly, while simultaneously freeing code enforcement resources for more serious violations. (See story on page 5.)

Permit process efficiencies: The Critical Areas Designation process (CAD), as outlined in the Critical Areas Ordinance, brings critical areas review to the beginning of the permit process, thus positioning customers for a smoother – and potentially less expensive – residential permit review process. The CAD allows the property owner to know in advance the critical area features and associated setbacks present on a site. This prevents costly plan changes and redesigns occurring from designing a house that cannot fit within the footprint established during the permit review process. DDES has prioritized efficiency and customer service, processing 99% of all Critical Areas Designations within eleven business days.

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KING COUNTY REACHING OUT TO PROPERTY OWNERS

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Strong participation in CAO incentive programs: The flexibility/stewardship options incorporated within the CAO offer landowners an opportunity to tailor wetland and stream buffers, and clearing restriction to the needs of their property, in exchange for commitment to a management plan protecting natural resources in the long term.

Participation in these programs has been strong during 2005, as outlined below. To date:

- 30 Rural Stewardship Plans have been initiated by property owners, and approximately 70 property owners have called with a serious interest in initiating the process. For information on Rural Stewardship Planning, contact Katie Vanderpool in DNR at 206-296-8362.
- 41 Forest Stewardship Plans have been completed during 2005, and another 19 plans are in progress with property owners. For information on Rural Forestry Planning, contact Kristi McClelland in DNR at 206-296-7820.

- The King Conservation District, which is the organization working with property owners to develop farm plans, reports that the demand for Farm Plans in 2005 may outpace that seen in 2004: In 2004, the KCD completed a total of 78 farm plans. As of the end of Q3 2005, the KCD has a total of 75-80 farm plans either completed or in progress. To contact the King Conservation District about Farm Management Planning, simply call 425-277-5581.

To view detailed information on the CAO, simply log onto the DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes and click on CRITICAL AREAS ORDINANCE INFORMATION. Information provided during our workshops and open houses can be found on the DDES Critical areas Web page under CAO EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS. To contact a staff member about critical areas questions or issues, simply call the DDES Critical Areas section at 206-296-6723.

DDES WEBSITE TIPS: GET YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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General information on a wide variety of building and land use topics

From the main DDES Web page, simply click on the INFORMATION BULLETINS button. OR, to save as a favorite: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/bulletin.htm>

Permit application forms

From the main DDES Web page, click on the Permit Information button. From there, click on Permit Application Forms. OR, to save as a favorite: <http://apps01.metrokc.gov/www6/ddes/scripts/forms.cfm>

Estimated fees for various permit types

From the main DDES Web page, click on the Permit Information button. From there, click on Permit Fee Estimates. OR, to save as a favorite: <http://apps01.metrokc.gov/www/ddes/scripts/fee2004.cfm>

To research critical areas, assessment and zoning information on any individual parcel in King County

From the main DDES Web page, click on the Property

Research button. From there, click on GIS Property Search. Read through the disclaimers and continue pushing the GO button at each opportunity. OR, to save as a favorite: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/gis/parcel/>

iMAP is King County's comprehensive property search tool. DDES has developed easy to access directions for iMAP at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/qnews/2002q3.htm#PROPERTY>.

For fast property searches using an address, a parcel number, or by navigating on a simple map, try the **Parcel Viewer** at http://www.metrokc.gov/gis/mapportal/PViewer_main.htm.

To view streaming video of past DDES workshops, or register for future workshops and events

From the main DDES Web page, click on DDES WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS. OR TO SAVE AS A FAVORITE: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/lusd/ddesclass.htm>.

QUESTIONS — JUST ASK US

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Information Systems Supervisor

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Chris Ricketts 206-296-6750

Building Plan Review Supervisor

Pamela Dhanapal 206-296-6731

Building Inspections Supervisor

(residential and commercial structures)

Bernard Moore 206-296-6762

Site Engineering and Planning Supervisor

(drainage review, parking, traffic, landscaping)

Jim Chan 206-296-6740

LAND USE SERVICES DIVISION

Division Director

Joe Miles 206-296-7179

Engineering Review Supervisor

(final plats and short plats, lot line adjustments)

Jim Sanders 206-296-7178

Current Planning Supervisor

(preliminary plat and short plats, SEPA, EIS, CUPs, shoreline permits)

Lisa Dinsmore 206-296-7171

Site Development Services Supervisor

(clearing, grading and forestry permits)

Randy Sandin 206-296-6778

Critical Areas Supervisor

(wetlands, streams, geo hazards)

Steve Bottheim 206-296-7144

Land Use Inspections Supervisor

(site infrastructure)

Steve Townsend 206-296-7204

Code Enforcement Supervisor

(building, environmental and health hazard complaints)

Elizabeth Deraitus 206-296-7090

CUSTOMER SERVICE NUMBERS

DDES Customer Information Line 206-296-6600

Permit Application Appointments 206-296-6797

DDES Billing Hot Line 206-296-6659

DDES OFFERS MORE EFFICIENT AND LESS COSTLY PERMIT PROCESS

RESIDENTIAL PERMIT CUSTOMERS CAN NOW CHOOSE NEW ENGINEERING REVIEW OPTION

King County is expanding its Preferred Consultant Program in an effort to improve customer service and make the permitting process more efficient and less costly, especially for customers applying for a residential building permit for the first time. The DDES Preferred Consultant Program now includes engineering review for single family homes.

First-time residential permit applicants often are intimidated by the process of selecting consultants to assist with permitting requirements. To assist these customers, DDES developed the Preferred Consultant Program in 2004, offering residential permit customers the option of choosing a critical areas consultant from a DDES list of preferred stream, geotechnical and wetland consultants. With engineering review now being one of the preferred consultant options, first-time residential permit customers are now offered even more predictability during the permitting process: Specifically, customers and DDES staff know that the Preferred Consultant will make a quality permit application submittal. This, in turn, expedites the permit review process and can ultimately save on permit review fees.

Preferred Consultants are those individuals with a proven track record of high quality work in King County. DDES is able to offer expedited permit review with the assurance that the consultant's work meets high standards. Another benefit for residential permit customers is easy access to a pool of proven engineering consultants. The benefit to the consultants on the list is increased visibility and a marketable certification.

Consultants looking to be listed on the DDES Preferred Consultant List should review the criteria posted on the

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King County

Department of Development and Environmental Services

QUARTERLY NEWS

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